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COORDINATION OF THE POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND OTHER BODIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING THEME: DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA: IMPLEMENTATION AND COORDINATED FOLLOW-UP BY THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM OF INITIATIVES ON AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

Letter dated 1 July 1999 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the United States Mission to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the text of the Blueprint for a United States-Africa Partnership for the Twenty-first Century that came out of the first United States-Africa Ministerial (see annex),* an agreement between the United States and 46 sub-Saharan African nations to foster greater economic development, trade, investment, political reform and mutual economic growth, held in Washington, D.C., from 15 to 18 March 1999.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Economic and Social Council, under agenda item 4, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) A. Peter BURLEIGH
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* The annex is being circulated in the language of submission only.

Annex

Blueprint for a United States-Africa Partnership for the Twenty-first Century, Washington, D.C., 18 March 1999

Eighty-three Ministers from forty-six sub-Saharan African nations, representatives from four North African nations, and the heads of eight African regional organizations met with President Clinton, eight members of the U.S. Cabinet, four agency heads, and other senior U.S. officials in Washington, D.C., March 15-18, 1999, to consider the future of the U.S.-Africa Partnership in the 21st Century. At this historic, unprecedented and productive gathering, we identified opportunities for enhanced cooperation as well as important issues to address collectively through our new Partnership.

We intend to work together on the major issues connecting sub-Saharan Africa and the United States. Given the Ministerial nature of these meetings, our dialogue focused on governmental actions. Yet we also took heed of the critical roles that the private sector and civil society can and must play in our countries and in our Partnership. We thus used the occasion to network with business and NGO representatives. Additionally, African participants found meetings with the U.S. Congress to be constructive and informative.

COMMON PERSPECTIVES

U.S. and African Ministers share the conviction that the acceleration of Africa's integration into the global economy is in our mutual interest and will benefit the people of both the United States and Africa. They recognize that each side of the Partnership has much to offer the other. The United States has capital, technology, strong experience in international trade and investment, and the world's richest and most open market. Africa has abundant natural resources and talented, hard-working people who are nearly three times more numerous than the population of the United States. Many sub-Saharan African nations have reformed their economies in the 1990s, liberalizing trade and investment regimes and moving toward a greater reliance on the private sector. These economies performed significantly better than in the previous two decades.

African-U.S. economic ties continue to grow. For example, U.S. exports to Africa grew more rapidly in 1998 than did U.S exports to most other regions and are now 45% greater than its exports to all countries of the former Soviet Union combined. On a balance of payments basis, American private investment consistently produces a higher rate of return in Africa than in any other region.

Aware of the role that the market plays in the creation of wealth and the efficient allocation of resources, many African governments continue efforts to establish conditions conducive to broad-based growth and sustainable economic development. These efforts include increased and more effective investment in human and physical capital, and poverty alleviation. African and U.S. participants agreed upon the importance of fiscal and monetary discipline, increasing domestic savings, creating improved conditions for private domestic and international investment, access to capital and technology, sustainable environmental practices, a healthy, well-educated citizenry, and transparent, predictable governance based on the rule of law and the consent of the governed.

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Through continued technical and development assistance, and through programs that facilitate private sector growth and development, the United States is committed to helping its African partners in this vital effort. At the same time, the U.S. will endeavor to increase support for African regional cooperation and integration, economic reform, democracy, good governance, and other shared objectives.

Long-term trends throughout Africa are encouraging. Many African nations are undertaking economic reforms and are making substantial progress in consolidating democracy and creating more inclusive societies. Our Partnership is committed to bolstering these positive developments where they are already in place and to nurturing the seeds of hope where turmoil has impeded their growth.

Africa is a vast and varied continent facing significant challenges as well as extraordinary opportunities. Conflicts impede economic, social, and political development, and they exact a terrible human toll. They also form breeding grounds for transnational threats such as terrorism, arms proliferation, crime syndicates, drug trafficking, and environmental degradation. If unchecked, these scourges could impede the hard-won gains of the last decade. The United States is committed to helping African nations and their regional organizations develop greater capacity to prevent and resolve conflicts. African participants welcomed the intensification of that American commitment and reaffirmed their responsibility - and determination - to solve their own problems.

THE WAY FORWARD

Discussion covered a broad range of economic and political issues, identifying opportunities for deeper mutual engagement and establishing procedures to address differences. The United States explained the philosophy of the Partnership for Economic Growth and Opportunity in Africa announced by the President on June 17, 1997. U.S. officials pointed out that it is based on the premise that economic reforms pursued by African countries have been effective and that reforming countries make the best use of external assistance. The United States should therefore make increasing efforts to devote special attention to reforming countries. Some African participants asked that the Partnership find ways to include all African countries at each stage of the reform process, which the United States assured them was a shared objective of the Partnership.

Trade

African participants called for the rapid passage by the U.S. Congress of the African Growth and Opportunity Act, both as a vital symbol of increased U.S. engagement and as evidence of U.S. support for African efforts to grow through increased openness to international trade and investment. Participants endorsed the premises underlying the Act, which would help integrate Africa into the global economy and build a strong commercial partnership between Africa and the United States. To enhance this partnership, the Department of Commerce Foreign Commercial Service will expand its country coverage to further assist U.S. businesses interested

in Africa. The participants noted that the benefits of increased trade would run in both directions. The Act would foster increased two-way trade. It would also attract investment to build African capacity to compete in the global economy, generating employment and planting the seeds for other market-based production.

The Act would also facilitate trade and investment by making the U.S. Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) more predictable, by extending the program for ten years. African Ministers called for the expansion of the number of GSP product lines, and the United States noted that it recently added some 1800 products under the GSP umbrella for Least Developed Countries, 29 of which are in Africa. These additional benefits would be extended by the Act to all eligible sub-Saharan African countries. Last year the United States announced GSP cumulation benefits for eligible members of SADC, WAEMU, and the EAC. Participants agreed that there is significant potential for increased African exports to the United States. One way of realizing this potential is through better understanding of U.S. laws, regulations, and procedures. African participants asked the United States to continue to expand programs that increase African understanding of U.S. market access requirements. The U.S. is planning seminars for sub-Saharan African nations on GSP in the near future.

African participants noted the specific problems and needs of small, island, and/or landlocked states, which may be marginalized in the process of globalization and liberalization. The United States noted the progress many African countries have made in facilitating access for foreign business enterprises and encouraged further liberalization of the business climate. At the same time, the participants noted that access to each other's markets needs to be further liberalized. The U.S. will support a request for a continuation of the current WTO Lome waiver for a sufficiently-long transitional period for non-reciprocal trade preferences and commodity protocols in favor of African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states in a post-Lome IV period as required by the present Convention.

African participants also called for the United States to continue to increase technical assistance to Africa's public and private sectors to promote Africa's integration into the global economy and the system of WTO rules. The U.S. is conducting a series of workshops in Africa on the WTO for the public and private sectors. The U.S. and African participants also agreed on the need for multilateral institutions to more effectively coordinate and cooperate with the WTO on trade and investment issues affecting African countries, primarily in the area of technical assistance. African participants asked the United States to support OAU/AEC permanent observer status in the WTO. The U.S. agreed to support this, in principle, pending the decision of the WTO on modalities for observership. The United States encouraged African governments to play a more active role in the WTO, and it has asked the Chairman of the WTO's General Council to undertake consultations to resolve the observer issue. African and U.S. representatives agreed to establish a mechanism for regular consultations on WTO and related matters, in Geneva and Washington as preparation for the WTO Ministerial advances.

Investment

African Ministers agreed to continue improving investment conditions and to market their countries more effectively. The United States, in turn, will seek more vigorously to encourage U.S. business to explore opportunities in Africa. This would stimulate employment in the countries of investment as well as in the United States, as American firms service those investments and increase their trade with Africa's growing economies. In this context, the participants agreed on the need to pursue regular dialogue on U.S.-Africa trade and investment issues.

The United States noted programs already contributing to this effort, starting with the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC). OPIC is currently providing nearly $1 billion in insurance and financing to 50 projects in 20 sub-Saharan countries. To facilitate its work it has executed new bilateral investment agreements with 12 sub-Saharan countries just since the President announced his economic Partnership initiative in 1997. Later that year, OPIC launched a $120 million New Africa Opportunity Fund for Southern Africa and a $150 million Modern Africa Growth and Investment Fund. It will also support one or more new private equity funds with aggregate capital of up to $500 million to be invested in privately sponsored infrastructure projects in sub-Saharan Africa.

The United States affirmed its interest in negotiating Bilateral Investment Treaties and Trade and Investment Framework Agreements with additional African nations and regional organizations. Participants identified opportunities for expanded cooperation in agribusiness and energy, and African Ministers requested investment in those and other core sectors -- such as industry, mining, tourism, telecommunications, transportation, and education -- that would have a major impact on their economies. They took advantage of a networking luncheon this week to discuss these priorities with American business representatives. The United States noted the investment guides it prepares on an annual basis for each African country and the help it has given a number of African countries in producing investor roadmaps. It also noted USAID's new Africa Trade and Investment Policy program developed under the Partnership. This program helps the strongest-reforming African governments and regional organizations improve the legal and regulatory environment for trade and investment activities. African Ministers expressed appreciation for these programs and asked for expanded American collaboration with African agencies that facilitate new investment.

Many ministers expressed frustration that while they had taken many economic reforms and adopted steps to address corruption and governance issues, foreign investment levels were still very disappointing. They said that the misperception of Africa among developed countries is profound and acting as a deterrent to the inflow of foreign investment and capital.

Finance

African and U.S. participants also discussed developments in international capital markets, current volatility in those markets, and ways in which African governments can best take advantage of international markets while safeguarding their economies from risks inherent in global financial markets.

Several ministers issued an appeal for the international community to develop an effective means for dealing with the severe financial problems faced by those countries emerging from conflict and called for closer collaboration between the IMF and World Bank across the board. The United States welcomed African suggestions that there should be greater and more regular communication with African nations on progress to reform the international financial architecture.

Most sub-Saharan African nations remain heavily reliant on flows of external financial support. Participants noted that the international financial institutions continued to be a major source of such support in 1998. The World Bank and African Development Bank provided over $5.4 billion of loans, investments, and grants to sub-Saharan Africa in that year, while the IMF has about $3 billion of commitments outstanding under current arrangements. The great majority of this funding is on highly concessional terms: new World Bank commitments to Africa under IDA represented about 35% of its global commitments of $7.1 billion in 1998 – the largest of any geographic region.

The United States reiterated its commitment to continued support for substantial programming by the international financial institutions in reforming sub-Saharan countries. The recent record demonstrates the strength of resolve in this respect, including a pledge of $800 million for the IDA-12 replenishment, making the United States the largest donor. Also, the United States maintained its position as the largest donor in the replenishment of the African Development Fund, and it supported a $7 billion capital increase for the African Development Bank, in which the United States is the largest non-African shareholder. The U.S. Administration has requested in its current budget a $50 million contribution to the trust fund for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC).

U.S. officials also described programs designed to support access by both American and African businesses to private equity and other forms of financing for ventures in Africa, including through the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, the Export-Import Bank, and the Trade and Development Agency. Participants encouraged closer cooperation between U.S. agencies and the African Development Bank and other regional institutions especially regarding project finance. African participants expressed concerns about the Interagency Credit Risk Assessment System (ICRAS).

Participants also noted the critical importance of strengthening the financial sector and increasing mobilization of domestic savings. They agreed that the micro-enterprise sector is important to Africa's economic development, financial sector growth, employment generation, and poverty alleviation. The informal micro-finance network should be seen as an integral component of the larger financial sector. They agreed that there are a variety of approaches for creating a healthy enabling environment for micro-enterprise prosperity. Governments should move cautiously, with a delicate hand and nuanced approaches to improve regulations, policy and supervision, including self-regulation by the pertinent sector. Finally, they discussed the link between micro-enterprise development and exports.

The Peace Corps, African Development Foundation, and USAID are already engaged in the promotion of micro-enterprise programs, as are African and American NGOS. The United States will seek to increase support for these programs, and African governments will seek to increase access to private credit and entrepreneurial opportunities for small investors, especially women.

Debt

All agreed that excessive debt burdens impede development and the transfer of new resources to countries in great need. The United States outlined its policy approach of providing relief – in concert with other major donors and the international financial institutions through Paris Club and HIPC – to governments that have taken steps to put their economies on a sound footing through the Paris Club. The U.S. noted the general consensus that economic reform by debtor countries themselves is the primary means by which countries in Africa will grow and sustain debt burdens in the future. Ministers also discussed the tension in debt policy between the desire for relief and the need to preserve a "culture of credit" in borrowing countries that will support private lending and encourage the effective use of loans.

African Ministers expressed appreciation for the relief provided by the international community. Some Ministers, however, stated forcefully that existing debt programs are not adequate to address the problems of a substantial number of Africans countries. A number of Ministers reported that their countries simply were not eligible for the HIPC program. Some said that forgiveness, not rescheduling, of bilateral debts was needed for a broader group of countries. Others said that debt relief for amounts owed to multilateral financial institutions has to be deeper, faster and broader, and a few said that debt relief is not the issue – but that all debt must be forgiven for the poorest countries.

Several Ministers also explained that their total debt, domestic and foreign, which remains unaddressed in international debt relief schemes, also constitutes a serious impediment to some governments' ability to finance development and social necessities. Several Ministers called for a new approach to international debt relief programs, with relief designed to suit a specific country's individual circumstances – on a case by case basis.

Some Ministers said that the determination of eligibility for debt relief and concessional lending does not take adequate account of the persistence of poverty in countries that have relatively higher GDPs. In this context, some Ministers requested debt relief, including multilateral debt, for middle-income African countries. These countries also have a lot of potential but cannot develop that potential if they remain heavily indebted.

The United States explained that its approach is designed to ensure that no country committed to fundamental reform is left with a debt burden that keeps it from meeting its people's basic human needs and spurring growth. To this end, the United States announced a major debt reduction initiative that includes components providing for deeper and accelerated debt reduction and inclusion of additional countries into existing debt reduction programs, both multilateral and bilateral. This proposal to the international community could result in forgiving an additional $70 billion in global debt.

The United States said it would seek significant improvements to the HIPC initiative at the Cologne Summit of the G-7 countries in June 1999:

First, a new focus on early relief by international financial institutions, which now reduce debt only at the end of the HIPC program; second, the complete forgiveness of all bilateral concessional loans to the poorest countries; third, deeper and broader reduction of bilateral debts, raising the amount to 90%; fourth, donor countries should commit to provide at least 90% of new development assistance on a grant basis to countries eligible for debt reduction; fifth, develop new approaches to help countries emerging from conflicts that have not had the chance to establish reform records and need immediate relief and concessional finance; and sixth, support for IMF gold sales to do its part, and additional contributions by the U.S. and other countries to the World Bank Trust Fund to help meet the cost of this initiative. The United States believes we should be prepared to provide even greater relief in exceptional cases where it could make a real difference.

The United States recognized the need for a continuing global dialogue on the issue of indebtedness of the poor countries and anticipated that the subject will remain high on the international agenda. As to the immediate future, the United States said that for its part, it expects to participate with other creditors during 1999-2000, through the Paris Club, in further debt relief for African countries totaling $2.9 billion. Having already forgiven $1.1 billion of bilateral concessional debt owed by sub-Saharan countries in the early '90s, the United States will forgive additional debt owed by strong-reforming African countries under the President's Partnership for Growth and Economic Opportunity. During 1999-2000, this could amount to over $400 million of concessional debt owed by six African countries, complementing Paris club and HIPC debt relief.

In conclusion, Ministers applauded the initiative proposed by the United States and some underscored their desire to see debt relief provided to an expanded range of countries. Ministers underscored the need to provide new financing to eligible countries in a manner which eases rather than exacerbates debt burdens. The United States reported that since 1985 it has provided new bilateral financing primarily in the form of grants to the poorest African countries to help keep their debt manageable – with grants totaling almost $12 billion for the most heavily indebted sub-Saharan countries. Ministers joined the United States in its consistent and forceful call to donor countries to adopt the practice to help avoid the recurrence of excessive debt burdens in the future. The United States and African nations agreed to continue close and substantive consultations on Africa's debt burden in appropriate fora, as well as bilaterally.

Infrastructure

Participants recognized the critical role of infrastructure, particularly transportation and telecommunications networks, in supporting Africa's economic growth, facilitating national and regional integration, and expanding trade regionally as well as globally. Poor transportation and telecommunications infrastructures continue to be two of the greatest barriers to Africa's development. Currently Africa's roads, ports, and airports are not capable of efficiently handling increased international trade flows. Poor telecommunications raises costs for all users. The competitive advantages that Africa enjoys in terms of human and natural resources are severely

diminished by the inefficiency of these systems. Participants agreed on the importance of continued privatization of transportation and telecommunications enterprises, harmonization of regulations and standards, and increased private investment and international financial resources to improve African economic infrastructure.

Participants agreed to work more closely together to identify Africa's transportation corridors that are needed to support regional and international trade. African participants asked that the United States and other donors give priority to such regional projects as the SADC Development Corridors, the East Africa Regional Road and Communications Networks, the Trans-African and Transnational Road Network in Central Africa, and the ECOWAS Transnational Highway Project. They expressed appreciation for the Safe Skies for Africa initiative, which seeks to quadruple the number of African countries that meet ICAO standards for safety oversight and to improve airport security and air navigation services in Africa. They recognized that improving safety and security opens the door for expanded air service, and that air service means more opportunity for trade and tourism – two powerful engines for the economic growth of African nations. Participants also acknowledged other U.S. transportation and communication projects, including the Federal Highway Administration's technology transfer centers.

U.S. agencies, particularly the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), the Export-Import Bank (Exim), and the Trade and Development Agency (TDA), agreed to expand their engagement with African countries and regional organizations in an effort to improve African air, surface, and maritime transportation, as well as communications infrastructure, through technical assistance and OPIC support for private investment in these areas.

Agribusiness

The participants agreed that agriculture in most African countries constitutes the backbone of their economies and is the major foreign exchange earner. They also highlighted agriculture's key role in employment and food security. They noted that previous African and international policies had impeded Africa's ability to produce and export up to its competitive potential. Ministers agreed on the need for further reforms, technical assistance, and international cooperation to open markets for agricultural products. They also agreed on the need for more cooperative research efforts in agriculture, and for U.S. assistance in attracting investment and technologies needed for value-added agricultural processing ventures in Africa. The issue of the market-distorting aspects of subsidies was discussed.

Energy

The need for sustainable supplies of energy to support basic human needs and aspirations is widely recognized as a critical component of development. Efficient energy systems are a key element of economic growth, productivity increases, and international competitiveness. Competitive energy markets promote efficiency, investment in improved technology, lower costs (including to consumers), and a higher level of national welfare. Energy also plays a key role in international competition and the ability of a country to attract private investment. Policy and regulatory measures in support of competitive, open markets that facilitate free trade and investment in energy are recognized as an important component of critical infrastructure

development. The United States and Africa stressed the importance of coordinating more effectively and economically Africa's national and regional energy and environmental programs. A strong, efficient, competitive energy sector can support growth and sustainable development and address local, regional, and global environmental concerns, including the effects of climate change.

Environment

African participants urged the United States to ratify the UN Convention to Combat Desertification. They also indicated the need for the U.S. Government to assume a leadership role in ensuring that industrial countries refrain from dumping and storage of toxic industrial waste and byproducts in Africa that are detrimental to its environment in general, and to its peoples' health in particular.

Regional Integration

Building on the Abuja Treaty as a cornerstone of regional integration, African participants stressed that regional groupings enhance African influence in the international arena and asked the United States to support such organizations as SADC, EAC, WAEMU, ECOWAS, UDEAC, CEMAC, COMESA, ECCAS, IGAD, and the IOC. Participants agreed that economic integration within Africa can improve economies of scale and reduce transaction costs for its own citizens as well as international business.

They also agreed that African regional organizations can help resolve conflicts, as ECOMOG has done, for example, in Liberia and Sierra Leone. In that regard, the United States pointed to the assistance it has provided regional organizations, such as ECOMOG and the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, as well as its technical assistance for economic integration to organizations such as SADC, EAC, IGAD, and COMESA. The United States is interested in extending that support to other regional groupings and agreed to look for additional ways to bolster regional integration in Africa, including encouragement for creative approaches by the international financial institutions. In the meantime it is coordinating closely with its SADC partners to ensure that the first-ever U.S.-SADC forum is a success. It encourages member states in SADC and EAC to ratify instruments that will make them eligible for GSP cumulation, as it encourages other African sub-regional organizations to take the trade-liberalizing steps that would make their members also eligible for such benefits.

Development Assistance

All U.S. and African participants agreed that development assistance remains an essential component of the effort to promote sustainable growth and alleviate poverty in Africa. Some participants noted recent research demonstrating that foreign assistance is most effective when provided to countries pursuing the strongest reforms. All agreed that it is essential to orient a component of current development assistance to support reforms now underway in order to elicit the trade, investment, and entrepreneurial responses needed to provide Africans more widespread and lasting opportunities to improve their standard of living.

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African participants expressed deep appreciation for U.S. humanitarian assistance, which has saved millions of lives, as well as for assistance that addresses long-term development, for example the African Food Security Initiative and other programs that support a broad range of agricultural training and cooperative extension. At the same time, African participants expressed the need for the United States to support the United Nations through policies and funding, as these support Africa. To this end, African ministers called on the United States to make good on its financial commitments to the United Nations.

It was noted that U.S. assistance comes in many forms and through many actors such as USAID, the Peace Corps, the African Development Foundation, NGOs, and international organizations to which the U.S. is a major, often the leading, contributor; for example, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR, the IMF, the World Bank, including IDA, and the African Development Bank and Fund.

African Ministers expressed great appreciation for the pledge President Clinton made during his trip to Africa last year to work with Congress to restore development assistance for Africa to historic high levels. As reflected in his budget requests for fiscal years 1999 and 2000, the Administration is following through on that commitment, with a focus on those countries where the policy environment is conducive to development. Of course, the nature of assistance and how it is used are every bit as important as the level of funds. Part of this equation must be finding the right balance between assistance provided through governments and through NGOs. U.S and African participants agreed to consult closely on African national priorities, and they noted the particular importance of developing human capital.

Human Capital

African and U.S. participants shared ideas on how to enhance development of Africa's human capital and institutional capacity. They agreed that increasing literacy and numeracy by improving the quality of and access to basic education is the foremost area to address. This is the first step toward skills development, higher education, life-long learning, and success in a knowledge-based economy. They also agreed that globalization and technological innovation demand a transformation in educational approaches. Educational systems should be reformed so that they are more relevant, purposeful, and practical. This is especially true in the area of empowerment of women. The United States described new technologies and strategic partnerships between African and U.S. universities, schools, and civic education institutions envisioned by President Clinton when he announced his Education Initiative. Africans welcomed that initiative and urged its speedy implementation. They also asked the United States to support Africa's research and development programs, including with information technology. African and U.S. participants agreed on the importance of a policy environment that will encourage the transfer, development, and application of appropriate technology, and the United States agreed to look into increasing assistance in this area, which is already substantial through the Leland Initiative. Some African delegates requested that the initiative be expanded to other African countries, particularly those in Central Africa.

Participants noted that there is a large number of professionals and technically trained people who have left Africa. Participants agreed on the need to reverse the brain drain through an African-led effort.

HIV/AIDS

The participants reviewed the severe social and economic impact of HIV/AIDS globally and in Africa. HIV/AIDS has already begun to arrest or reverse significant development gains. The participants acknowledged the imperative for a strong political, multi-sectoral, and public health response to deal with the epidemic and its consequences. Senegal and Uganda offer models of how the incidence of new cases can be reduced. Participants agreed on the need for open and serious political discussion and the involvement of the populace at the grassroots level to combat this epidemic. The United States and Africa agreed to deepen their partnership in the areas of collaborative research on HIV/AIDS, effective and affordable treatment, and cooperative efforts to build African capacity to better monitor the prevalence of the disease.

Transnational Threats

Participants undertook to enhance cooperation in combating such transnational security threats as crime, narcotics, terrorism, and arms proliferation. All expressed strong support for the West African small arms moratorium. The United States and African participants expressed their mutual commitment to expand and build on existing cooperation to address transnational threats. The United States reiterated its sincere thanks for the cooperation it has received from African governments in the aftermath of the bombings of its Embassies in Tanzania and Kenya to ensure the mutual safety of all our citizens. They and the United States re-committed to working with each other to fight crime and disease and to ensure environmentally sound development.

Democracy, Governance, and Human Rights

African and American participants agreed on the mutually reinforcing nature of economic development and democracy, and they shared ideas on the links between the two. They thus reaffirmed their commitment to promote economic growth, democracy, and respect for worker and human rights. In this vein, the U.S. announced a new program to work with Africa to combat child labor. Participants touched on all aspects of good governance, and they agreed on the need to strengthen judicial systems and governmental checks and balances, introduce simple and clear regulations, and ensure accountability. Participants recognized the obligation borne by public institutions, notably including budget ministries and central banks, to be transparent and accountable in their handling of public funds. To this end, participants noted their interest in following current standards of public accountability, including the IMF's Code of Good Practices on Fiscal Transparency. The United States, for its part, agreed to support technical assistance, both bilaterally and multilaterally via the international financial institutions, to enable African governments to meet these standards.

While Africa is not the only place harboring corruption, participants agreed that corruption wastes Africa's scarce resources and impedes its full integration into the world economy. Corruption's negative impact is magnified in poorer countries, compounding development

problems. Participants agreed that tackling corruption requires coordinated action – both national and international, including improved investigatory tools, better institutional and human capacity-building, and protection for anti-corruption advocates. African participants requested U.S. assistance with these efforts. There was general agreement that African countries should accede to a binding African anti-corruption convention. The U.S. encouraged this, noting progress made thus far.

There was general agreement on the need for greater international cooperation to strengthen the rule of law and democratic institutions. African participants shared lessons learned and success stories on how to implement strong reforms in these areas. They welcomed the Great Lakes Justice Initiative, which seeks to break cycles of violence by building credible, impartial justice systems and by bolstering ethnic reconciliation at the grassroots level. Another U.S. initiative in this field is Radio Democracy for Africa, which will work with African and American media to disseminate news responsibly through the region.

Conflict Resolution

Participants agreed that violent conflict poses a great threat to African reform efforts. They further noted that, while essential security needs must be addressed, it also is essential that military expenditure burdens not be allowed to divert scarce resources from vital social and developmental programs. Conflict saps resources and destabilizes countries and regions, scaring off potential investors. Participants further agreed that the enabling environment necessary for political and economic reform requires stability derived from strong mechanisms that prevent or mitigate violent conflict and its profound and lasting effects. African participants stressed the need for U.S. support for conflict resolution and programs aimed at integrating ex-combatants and demobilized soldiers in development efforts.

The participants agreed on the importance of building the capacity of African mechanisms to prevent and resolve conflicts. The OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, and Resolution could serve as one such mechanism, but participants stressed that carefully planned support for increasing its capacity was essential. Many of the participants cited ECOMOG's contributions towards mitigating increased violence in the subregion, as well as collaborative efforts to build peacekeeping capacity, such as the African Crisis Response Initiative. They also expressed concern about the ongoing conflicts in Central Africa and their damaging effects on the development process, and they encouraged current sub-regional initiatives, such as COPAX, to prevent and resolve conflicts and to build confidence and peace. The United States and Africa agreed to continue to work together to strengthen African capacity in these areas. One such effort is the establishment of the U.S.-funded African Center for Security Studies and to look for a permanent location for the Center as a means to foster increased military professionalism and civil-military cooperation.

In sum, the United States and its African partners firmly committed to maximize their diplomatic efforts and cooperation on conflict prevention and resolution, a critical component of the growing U.S.- Africa Partnership. All participants also recognized the UN's efforts to resolve conflict in Africa.

ONE STEP, ONE JOURNEY

All agreed that the Ministerial helped further illuminate the breadth and depth of the U.S.-Africa partnership, and set it on a firm foundation for future mutual advancement in the 21st century. They undertook to advance their mutual commitment to work together for the benefit of all concerned. In this vein, they noted the importance of continuing a U.S.-Africa dialogue on issues of common concern and agreed to explore means of ensuring that consultations continue.